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 PREDESTINATION CALMLY CONSIDERED.

[BY JOHN WESLEY, M.A.]

[Continued from page 321.]

XXXIV. **P**ERHAPS you will say they are not condemned for actual, but for original sin. What do you mean by this term? The inward corruption of our nature? If so, it has been spoken of before. Or do you mean, the sin which *Adam* committed in paradise? That this is imputed to all men, I allow; yea, that by reason thereof, *the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now*: but that any will be damned for this alone, I allow not, till you shew me where it is written. Bring me plain proof from scripture, and I submit: but till then, I utterly deny it.

XXXV. Should you not rather say, that *unbelief* is the damning sin? and that those who are condemned in that day, will be therefore condemned, *because they believed not on the name of the only-begotten Son of GOD*. But could they believe? Was not this faith, both the *gift* and the *work* of GOD in the soul? And was it not a gift which he had eternally decreed, never to give them? Was it not a work which he was of old unchangeably determined never to work in their souls? Shall these men then be condemned, because
GOD

GOD would not work ; because they did not receive what GOD would not give : could they “ ungrasp the hold of his “ right-hand, or force Omnipotence ?”

XXXVI. There is, over and above, a peculiar difficulty here. You say, Christ did not die for these men. But if so, there was an impossibility in the very nature of the thing, that they should ever savingly believe. For what is saving faith, but “ a confidence in GOD through Christ that loved *me*, and gave himself for *me* ?” Loved *thee*, thou reprobate ! gave himself for *thee* ! Away ! thou hast neither part nor lot herein. Thou believe in Christ, thou accursed spirit ! damned, or ever thou wert born ! There never was any object for thy faith : there never was any thing for thee to believe. GOD himself (thus must you speak to be consistent with yourself) with all his omnipotence, could not make thee believe Christ atoned for thy sins, unless he had made thee believe a lie.

XXXVII. If then GOD be just, there cannot, on *your* scheme, be any judgment to come : we may add, nor any future state, either of reward or punishment. If there be such a state, GOD will therein *render to every man according to his deeds : to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life : but to them who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*

But how is this reconcileable with *your* scheme ? You say, the reprobates cannot but do evil, and that the elect, from the day of GOD’s power, cannot but continue in well-doing. You suppose all this is unchangeably decreed : in consequence whereof, GOD acts irresistibly on the one, and satan on the other. Then, it is impossible for either one or the other, to *help acting* as they do ; or rather, to *help being acted upon*, in the manner wherein they are. For if we speak properly, neither the one nor the other can be said to *act* at all. Can a stone be said to act, when it is thrown out of a sling ? or a ball, when it is discharged from a cannon ? No more can a man be said to act, if he be only

ly moved by a force he cannot resist. But if the case be thus, you leave no room either for reward or punishment. Shall the stone be rewarded for rising from the sling, or punished for falling down? Shall the cannon-ball be rewarded for flying towards the sun, or punished for receding from it? As incapable of either reward or punishment is the man, who is supposed to be impelled by a force he cannot resist. Justice can have no place in rewarding or punishing mere machines, driven to and fro by an external force. So that your supposition of GOD's ordaining from eternity whatsoever should be done to the end of the world; as well as that of GOD's acting irresistibly in the elect, and satan's acting irresistibly in the reprobates; utterly overthrows the scripture-doctrine of rewards and punishments, as well as of a judgment to come.

XXXVIII. Thus ill does that election which implies reprobation agree with the scripture account of GOD's justice. And does it agree any better with his truth? How will you reconcile it with those plain assertions, Ezek. xviii. 23. &c. *Have I any pleasure at all, that the wicked should die, saith the Lord GOD? and not that he should return from his ways, and live? Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed—for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.*

Ezek. xxxiii. 11. &c. *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

XXXIX. But perhaps you will say, "These ought to be limited and explained by other passages of scripture; where—in this doctrine is as clearly affirmed, as it is denied in these?" I must answer, very plain; if this were true, we must give up all the scriptures together: nor would the infidels allow the Bible so honourable a title, as that of a cunningly devised fable. But it is not true: it has no colour of truth: it is absolutely, notoriously false. To tear up the very roots of reprobation, and of all doctrines that have

have a necessary connection therewith, GOD declares in his word these three things, and that explicitly, in so many terms, 1. *Christ died for all*, 2 Cor. v. 15. namely, all that were dead in sin, as the words immediately preceding fix the sense: here is the fact affirmed. 2. *He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. even of all those for whom he died: here is the consequence of his dying for all. And 3. *he died for all, that they might not live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them*, 2 Cor. v. 15. that they might be saved from their sins: here is the design, the end of his dying for them. Now shew me the scriptures, wherein GOD declares in equally express terms, 1. *Christ did not die for all*, but for some only. 2. *Christ is not the propitiation for the sins of the whole world*. And 3. *he did not die for all*, at least, not with that intent, *that they should live unto him who died for them*. Shew me, I say, the scriptures that affirm these three things, in equally express terms. You know, there are none. Nor is it possible to evade the force of those above recited, but by supplying in number, what is wanting in weight: by heaping abundance of texts together, whereby, (though none of them speak home to the point) the patrons of that opinion dazzle the eyes of the unwary, and quite overlay the understanding both of themselves, and those that hear them.

XL. To proceed. What an account does this doctrine give, of the sincerity of GOD in a thousand declarations, such as these, *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always! that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever*, Deut. v. 29. *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me: so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust; and they walked in their own counsels. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries*, Psalm. lxxxii. 11, &c. And all this time you suppose GOD had unchangeably ordained, that there never should be *such an heart in them!* that it never

ver should be possible for the people whom he thus *seemed* to lament over, to *hearken unto him*, or to *walk in his ways*!

XLI. How clear and strong is the reasoning of Dr. Watts on this head? "It is very hard indeed to vindicate the *sincerity* of the blessed GOD, or his Son, in their universal offers of grace and salvation to men; and their sending ministers with such messages and invitations to accept of mercy; if there be not at least a conditional pardon and salvation provided for them.

"His ministers, indeed, as they know not the event of things, may be *sincere* in offering salvation to all persons, according to their general commission, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*: But how can GOD or Christ be *sincere* in sending them with this commission, to offer his grace to all men, if GOD has not provided such grace for *all men*, no, not so much as conditionally.

"It is hard to suppose, that the great GOD, who is truth itself, and faithful in all his dealings, should call upon dying men, to trust in a Saviour for eternal life, when this Saviour has not eternal life entrusted with him, to give them if they do as he requires. 'Tis hard to conceive how the great governor of the world can be *sincere* in inviting sinners, who are on the brink of hell, to cast themselves upon an empty word of invitation, a mere shadow and appearance of support, if there be nothing real to bear them up from these deeps of destruction; nothing but mere words and empty invitations! Can we think that the righteous and holy GOD would encourage his ministers, to call them to leave and rest the weight of their immortal concerns, upon a gospel, a covenant of grace, a Mediator, and his merit and righteousness! all which are a mere nothing with regard to them, a heap of empty names, an unsupporting void which cannot uphold them?"

XLII. Our blessed Lord does indisputably command and invite *all men every where to repent*. He calleth all. He sends his ambassadors, in his name, *to preach the gospel to every creature*. He himself *preached deliverance to the cap-*

tives, without any hint of restriction or limitation. But now, in what manner do you represent him, while he is employed in this work? You suppose him to be standing at the prison-doors, having the keys thereof in his hands, and to be continually inviting the prisoners to come forth, commanding them to accept of that invitation, urging every motive which can possibly induce them to comply with that command; adding the most precious promises if they obey; the most dreadful threatnings, if they obey not: and all this time you suppose him to be unalterably determined in himself, never to open the doors for them! even while he is crying, *Come ye, come ye, from that evil place; for why will ye die, O house of Israel!* "Why! (might one of them reply) because we cannot help it. We cannot help ourselves; and thou *will* not help us. It is not in our power to break the gates of brass; and it is not thy pleasure to open them. Why *will* we die! we *must* die: because it is not thy will to save us." Alas! my brethren! what kind of sincerity is this, which you ascribe to GOD our Saviour?

XLIII. So ill do election and reprobation agree with the truth and sincerity of GOD. But do they not agree least of all, with the scriptural account of his love and goodness! that attribute which GOD peculiarly claims, wherein he glories above all the rest. It is not written, "GOD is justice, or GOD is truth" (although he is just and true in all his ways;) but it is written, *GOD is love; love in the abstract, without bounds: and there is no end of his goodness.* His love extends to those who neither love nor fear him. He is good, even to the evil and the unthankful; yea, without any exception or limitation, to all the children of men. For *the Lord is loving (or good) to every man, and his mercy is over all his works.*

But how is GOD good or loving to a *reprobate*, or one that is not *elect*? (you may chuse either term; for if none but the unconditionally-elect are saved, it comes precisely to the same thing.) You cannot say, he is an object of the love or goodness of GOD, with regard to his eternal

eternal estate, whom he created (says Mr. Calvin plainly and fairly) *in vitæ contumeliam, et mortis exitium; to live a reproach, and die everlastingly*. Surely, no one can dream that the goodness of GOD is at all concerned with this man's eternal state. "However, GOD is good to him in "this world." What! when by reason of GOD's unchangeable decree, it had been good for this man, never to have been born, when his very birth was a curse, not a blessing? "Well, but he now enjoys many of the gifts of "GOD, both gifts of nature and of providence. He has "food and raiment, and comforts of various kinds. And "are not all these great blessings?" No, not to him. At the price he is to pay for them, every one of these also is a curse. Every one of these comforts is by an eternal decree, to cost him a thousand pangs in hell. For every moment's pleasure which he now enjoys, he is to suffer the torment of more than a thousand years: for the smoke of that pit which is preparing for him, ascendeth up for ever and ever. GOD knew this would be the fruit of whatever he should enjoy, before the vapour of life fled away. He designed it should. It was his very purpose, in giving him those enjoyments. So that by all these (according to *your* account) he is in truth and reality, only fattening the ox for the slaughter. "Nay, but GOD gives him grace too." Yes, but what kind of grace? *Saving* grace, you own, he has none: none of a saving nature. And the *common* grace he has, was not given with any design to save his soul; nor with any design to do him any good at all; but only to restrain him from hurting the elect; so far from doing him good, that this grace also necessarily increases his damnation. And GOD knows this, you say; and designed it should: it was one great end for which he gave it! Then I desire to know, how is GOD good or loving to this man, either with regard to time or eternity?

XLIV. Let us suppose a particular instance. Here stands a man, who is reprobated from all eternity; or, if you would express it more smoothly, one who is not elected, whom GOD eternally decreed to pass by. Thou hast nothing

thing therefore to expect from GOD after death, but to be cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone; GOD having consigned thy unborn soul to hell, by a decree which cannot pass away. And from the time thou wast born under the irrevocable curse of GOD, thou canst have no peace. For there is no peace to the wicked, and such thou art doomed to continue, even from thy mother's womb. Accordingly, GOD giveth thee of this world's goods, on purpose to enhance thy damnation. He gives thee now substance or friends, in order hereafter to heap the more coals of fire upon thy head. He filleth thee with food, he maketh thee fat and well-liking, to make thee a more specious sacrifice to his vengeance. Good-nature, generosity, a good understanding, various knowledge, it may be, or eloquence, are the flowers wherewith he adorneth thee, thou poor victim, before thou art brought to the slaughter. Thou hast grace too! but what grace? not saving grace. That is not for thee, but for the elect only. Thine may properly be termed *damning grace*; since it is not only such in the event, but in the intention. Thou receivedst it of GOD for that very end, that thou mightest receive the greater damnation. It was not given to convert thee, but only to convince; not to make thee without sin, but without excuse; not to destroy, but to arm the worm that never dieth, and to blow up the fire that never shall be quenched.

XLV. Now I beseech you to consider calmly, how is GOD good or loving to this man? Is not this such love as makes your blood run cold? as causes the ears of him that heareth to tingle? And can you believe there is that man on earth or in hell, who can truly tell GOD, "Thus hast thou done?" Can you think that the loving, the merciful GOD, ever dealt thus with any soul which he hath made? But you must, and do believe this, if you believe unconditional election. For it holds reprobation in its bosom: they never were, never can be divided. Take then your choice. If for the sake of election you will swallow reprobation, well: but if you cannot digest this, you must necessarily give up unconditional election.

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SERMON

SERMON XX.

On HEBREWS vi. 1.

Let us go on to perfection.

THE whole sentence runs thus: *Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward GOD, which he had just before termed, the first principles of the oracles of GOD, and meat fit for babes, for such as have just tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

That the doing of this is a point of the utmost importance, the apostle intimates in the next words; *This will we do if GOD permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the good word of GOD, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.* As if he had said, if they do not go on to perfection, they are in the utmost danger of falling away. And if they do fall away, it is impossible (that is, exceeding hard) to renew them again unto repentance.

In order to make this very important scripture as *easy* to be understood as possible, I shall endeavour,

First, To shew what perfection is.

Secondly, To answer some objections to it: and,

Thirdly, To expostulate a little with the opposers of it.

First, I will endeavour to shew what perfection is.

1. And first, I do not conceive the perfection here spoken of, to be the perfection of angels. As those glorious beings never *left their first estate*, never declined from their original perfection, all their native faculties are unimpaired, their understanding in particular is still a lamp of light, their apprehension of all things clear and distinct, and their judgment always true. Hence, though their knowledge is limited, (for they are creatures) though they are ignorant of innumerable things, yet they are not liable to mistake:
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their knowledge is perfect in its kind. And as their affections are all constantly guided by their unerring understanding, so all their actions are suitable thereto; so they do every moment not their own will, but the good and acceptable will of GOD. Therefore it is not possible for man, whose understanding is darkened, to whom mistake is as natural as ignorance, who cannot think at all, but by the mediation of organs which are weakened and depraved, like the other parts of his corruptible body: it is not possible, I say, for man always to think right, to apprehend things distinctly, and to judge truly of them. In consequence hereof his affections, depending on his understanding, are variously disordered. And his words and actions are influenced more or less, by the disorder both of his understanding and affections. It follows, that no man, while in the body, can possibly attain to *angelic perfection*.

2. Neither can any man while he is in a corruptible body, attain to *adamic perfection*. • Adam before his fall, was undoubtedly as pure, as free from sin as even the holy angels. • In like manner his understanding was as clear as theirs, and his affections as regular. In virtue of this, as he always judged right, so he was able always to speak and act right. But since man rebelled against GOD, the case is widely different with him. He is no longer able to avoid falling into innumerable mistakes: consequently he cannot always avoid wrong affections, neither can he always think, speak, and act right. Therefore man, in his present state, can no more attain *adamic* than *angelic* perfection.

3. The highest perfection which man can attain, while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance and error, and a thousand other infirmities. And from wrong judgments, wrong words and actions will often necessarily flow. And in some cases, wrong affections also may spring from the same source. I may judge wrong of *you*: I may think more or less highly of you than I ought to think. And this mistake in my judgment may not only occasion something wrong in my behaviour; but it may have a still deeper

er effect: it may occasion something wrong in my affections. From a wrong apprehension, I may love and esteem you either more or less than I ought. Nor can I be freed from a liableness to such a mistake, while I remain in a corruptible body. A thousand infirmities in consequence of this, will attend my spirit, till it returns to GOD who gave it. And in numberless instances it comes short of doing the will of GOD, as Adam did in Paradise. Hence the best of men may say from the heart,

“ Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death,”

for innumerable violations of the adamic as well as the angelic law. It is well therefore for us, that we are not now under these, but under the law of love. *Love is now the fulfilling of the law*, which is given to fallen man. This is now, with respect to us, *the perfect law*. But even against this, through the present weakness of our understanding, we are continually liable to transgress. Therefore every man living needs the blood of atonement, or he could not stand before GOD.

4. What is then the perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, *My son, give me thy heart*. It is the *loving the Lord his GOD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind*. This is the sum of Christian perfection: it is all comprised in that one word, Love. The first branch of it is the love of GOD: and as he that loves GOD, loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*: these contain the whole of Christian perfection.

5. Another view of this is given us in those words of the great apostle, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*. For although this immediately and directly refers to the humility of our Lord, yet it may be taken in a
far

far more extensive sense, so as to include the whole disposition of his mind, all his affections, all his tempers, both toward GOD and man. Now it is certain, that as there was no evil affection in him, so no good affection or temper was wanting. So that *whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovely*, are all included in the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

6. St. Paul, when writing to the *Galatians*, places perfection in yet another view. It is the one undivided fruit of the Spirit, which he describes thus. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace: long-suffering, gentleness, goodness: fidelity*, (so the word should be translated here) *meekness, temperance*. What a glorious constellation of graces is here! Now suppose all these things to be knit together in one, to be united together in the soul of a believer, this is Christian perfection.

7. Again he writes to the Christians at *Ephesus*, of putting on the new man, which is created after GOD, in righteousness and true holiness. And to the *Colossians*, of the new man, renewed after the image of him that created him: plainly referring to the words in Genesis (chap. i. 27.) *So GOD created man in his own image*. Now the moral image of GOD consists (as the apostle observes) in righteousness and true holiness. By sin this is totally destroyed. And we never can recover it, till we are created a-new in Christ Jesus. And this is perfection. ●

8. St. Peter expresses it in a still different manner, tho' to the same effect. *As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation*, 1 Peter i. 15. According to this apostle then, perfection is another name for universal holiness: inward and outward righteousness: holiness of life arising from holiness of heart.

9. If any expressions can be stronger than these, they are those of St. Paul to the *Thessalonians*: (1 Epistle v. 23.) *The GOD of peace himself sanctify you wholly: and may the whole of you, the spirit, the soul and the body* (this is the literal translation) *be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

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10. We cannot shew this sanctification in a more excellent way, than by complying with that exhortation of the apostle, *I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies* (yourselves, your souls and bodies; a part put for the whole, by a common figure of speech) *a living sacrifice unto GOD*; to whom ye were consecrated many years ago in baptism. When, what was then devoted is actually presented to GOD, then is the man of GOD perfect.

11. To the same effect St. Peter says, 1 Epistle ii. 5. *Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to GOD through Jesus Christ*. But what sacrifices shall we offer now, seeing the Jewish dispensation is at an end? If you have truly presented yourselves, you offer up to him continually, all your thoughts, and words and actions, through the Son of his love, as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

12. Thus you experience, that he whose name is called Jesus, does not bear that name in vain: that he does in fact *save his people from their sins*, the root as well as the branches. And this *salvation from sin*, from all sin, is another description of perfection, though indeed it expresses only the least, the lower branch of it, only the negative part of the great salvation. ■

II. I proposed, in the second place, to answer some objections to this scriptural account of perfection.

1. One common objection to it is, That there is no promise of it in the word of GOD. If this be so, we must give it up: we should have no foundation to build upon. For the promises of GOD are the only sure foundation of our hope. But surely there is a very clear and full promise that we shall all love the Lord our GOD with all our hearts. So we read, Deut. xxx. 6. *The Lord thy GOD will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*. Equally express is the word of our Lord, which is no less a promise, though in the form of a command, (Matt. xxii. 37.) *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*: no words can be more

strong than these, no promise can be more express. In like manner, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* is as express a promise as a command.

2. And indeed that general and unlimited promise, which runs through the whole gospel-dispensation, *I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts*, turns all the commands into promises; and consequently that among the rest, *let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*. The command here is equivalent to a promise, and gives us full reason to expect, that the Lord will work in us what he requires of us.

3. With regard to the fruit of the spirit, the apostle in affirming, *The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance*: does in effect affirm, that the Holy Spirit actually works love, and these other tempers in those that are led by him. So that here also we have firm ground to tread upon; this scripture likewise being equivalent to a promise, and assuring us that all these shall be wrought in us, provided we are led by the Spirit.

4. And when the apostle says to the *Ephesians*, (chap. iv. 21, &c.) *Ye have been taught, as the truth is in Jesus, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, which is created after GOD, (that is, after the image of GOD,) in righteousness and true holiness*: he leaves us no room to doubt, but GOD will thus renew us in the spirit of our mind, and create us anew in the image of GOD, wherein we were at first created. Otherwise it could not be said, that this is *the truth as it is in Jesus*.

5. The command of GOD given by St. Peter, *Be ye holy as he that hath called you is holy in all manner of conversation*, implies a promise, that we shall be thus holy, if we are not wanting to ourselves. Nothing can be wanting on GOD's part: as he has called us to holiness, he is undoubtedly willing, as well as able, to work this holiness in us. For he cannot mock his helpless creatures, calling us to receive what he never intends to give. That he does call us thereto is undeniable; therefore he will give it, if we are not disobedient to the heavenly calling.

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6. The prayer of St. Paul to the *Thessalonians*, That GOD would *sanctify them throughout*, and that the whole of them, the spirit, the soul, and the body, might be preserved blameless: will undoubtedly be heard in behalf of all the children of GOD, as well as of those at *Thessalonica*. Hereby therefore all christians are encouraged to expect the same blessing from the GOD of peace, namely, that they also shall be sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul and body: and that the whole of them shall be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7. But the great question is, whether there is any promise in scripture, that we shall be saved from sin? Undoubtedly there is. Such is that promise, Psalm cxxx. 8. *He shall redeem Israel from all his sins*: exactly answerable to those words of the angel, *He shall save his people from their sins*, and surely he is able to save unto the uttermost, them that come unto GOD through him. Such is that glorious promise given through the prophet Ezekiel, in the 36th chapter. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*, ver. 25—27. Such (to mention no more) is that pronounced by Zachariah, (Luke i. 73—75,) the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies (and such doubtless are all our sins) to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life. The last part of this promise is peculiarly worthy of our observation. Lest any should say, "True, we shall be saved from our sins when we die;" that clause is remarkably added, as if on purpose to obviate this pretence, *all the days of our life*. With what modesty then can any one affirm, "That none shall enjoy this liberty till death?"

8. "But

8. "But, say some, this cannot be the meaning of the words; for the thing is impossible." It is impossible to men: but the things impossible with men, are possible with GOD. "Nay, but this is impossible in its own nature: for it implies a contradiction, that a man should be saved from all sin, while he is in a sinful body."

There is a great deal of force in this objection. And perhaps we allow most of what you contend for. We have already allowed that while we are in the body, we cannot be wholly free from mistake. Notwithstanding all our care, we shall still be liable to judge wrong in many instances. And a mistake in judgment will very frequently occasion a mistake in practice. Nay, a wrong judgment may occasion something in the temper or passions, which is not strictly right. It may occasion needless fear, or ill-grounded hope; unreasonable love, or unreasonable aversion. But all this is no way inconsistent with the perfection above described.

9. You say, "Yes, it is inconsistent with the last article: it cannot consist with salvation from sin." I answer, it will perfectly well consist with salvation from sin, according to the following definition of sin, (which I apprehend to be the scriptural definition of it) "A voluntary transgression of a known law." "Nay, but all transgressions of the law of GOD, whether voluntary or involuntary, are sin. For St. John says, *All sin is a transgression of the law.*" True, but he does not say, "All transgression of the law is sin." This I deny: let him prove it that can. •

To say the truth, this is a mere strife of words. You say, "None is saved from sin in *your* sense of the word:" but I do not admit of that sense, because the word is never so taken in scripture. And you cannot deny the possibility of being saved from sin, in *my* sense of the word. And this is the sense wherein the word sin is over and over taken in scripture.

"But surely we cannot be saved from sin, while we dwell in a *sinful body.*" A *sinful body*? I pray, observe, how deeply ambiguous, how equivocal this expression is! But there is no authority for it in scripture: the word *sinful body* is never found there. And as it is totally unscriptural, so

it is palpably absurd. For no *body*, or matter of any kind, can be *sinful*: spirits alone are capable of sin. Pray, in what part of the body should sin lodge? It cannot lodge in the skin, nor in the muscles, or nerves, or veins, or arteries: it cannot be in the bones any more than in the hair, or nails. Only the soul can be the seat of sin.

10. "But does not St. Paul himself say, *They that are in the flesh, cannot please GOD?*" I am afraid the sound of these words has deceived many unwary souls; who have been told those words, *they that are in the flesh*, mean the same as they that are in the body. No, nothing less. *The flesh* in this text no more means the body than it does the soul. Abel, Enoch, Abraham: yea, all that cloud of witnesses recited by St. Paul in the eleventh of the Hebrews, did actually please GOD, while they were in the body, as he himself testifies. The expression therefore here means neither more nor less, than they that are unbelievers, they that are in their natural state, they that are without GOD in the world.

11. But let us attend to the reason of the thing. Why cannot the Almighty sanctify the soul while it is in the body? Cannot he sanctify you while you are in this house, as well as in the open air? Can the walls of brick or stone hinder him? No more can these walls of flesh and blood hinder him a moment from sanctifying you throughout. He can just as easily save you from all sin in the body, as out of the body.

"But has he promised, thus to save us from sin, while we are in the body?" Undoubtedly he has: for a promise is implied in every commandment of GOD: consequently in that, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*. For this and every other commandment is given, not to the dead, but to the living. It is also expressed in the words above recited, That we should *walk in holiness before him all the days of our life*.

I have dwelt the longer on this, because it is the grand argument of those who oppose salvation from sin: and also, because it has not been so frequently and so fully answered:

whereas

whereas the arguments taken from scripture, have been answered a hundred times over.

12. But a still more plausible objection remains, taken from experience; which is, That there are no living witnesses of this salvation from sin. In answer to this I allow,

1. That there are not many: even in this sense, there are *not many fathers*. Such is our hardness of heart, such our slowness to believe what both the prophets and apostles have spoke, that there are few, exceeding few true witnesses of the great salvation.

I allow, 2. That there are false witnesses, who either deceive their own souls, and speak of the things they know not: or *speak lies in hypocrisy*. And I have frequently wondered, that we have not more of both sorts. It is nothing strange, that men of warm imaginations should deceive themselves in this matter. Many do the same with regard to justification: they imagine they are justified, and are not. But though many imagine it falsely, yet there are some that are truly justified. And thus, though many imagine they are sanctified, and are not, yet there are some that are really sanctified. I allow, 3dly, That some who once enjoyed full salvation, have now totally lost it. They once walked in glorious liberty, giving GOD their whole heart, *rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks*. But it is past. They now are shorn of their strength, and become like other men. Perhaps they do not give up their confidence; they still have a sense of his pardoning love. But even this is frequently assaulted by doubts and fears, so that they hold it with a trembling hand.

13. "Nay this (say some pious and sensible men) is the very thing which we contend for. We grant, it may please GOD, to make some of his children for a time unspeakably holy and happy. We will not deny, that they may enjoy all the holiness and happiness which you speak of. But it is only for a time: GOD never designed, that it should continue to their lives' end. Consequently sin is only suspended: it is not destroyed."

This

This you affirm. But it is a thing of so deep importance, that it cannot be allowed without clear and cogent proof. And where is the proof? We know that in general *the gifts and callings of GOD are without repentance*. He does not repent of any gifts which he hath bestowed upon the children of men. And how does the contrary appear, with regard to this particular gift of GOD? Why should we imagine, that he will make an exception, with respect to the most precious of all his gifts on this side heaven? Is he not as able to give it us always, as to give it once? as able to give it for fifty years, as for one day? and how can it be proved, that he is not willing to continue this his loving-kindness? How is this supposition, that he is not willing, consistent with the positive assertion of the apostle? Who after exhorting the Christians at *Thessalonica*, and in them all Christians in all ages, to *rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks*, immediately adds (as if on purpose to answer those, who denied, not the power, but the will of GOD to work this in them) *For this is the will of GOD concerning you in Christ Jesus*. Nay, and it is remarkable, that after he had delivered that glorious promise (such it properly is) in the twenty third verse, *The very GOD of peace shall sanctify you wholly, and the whole of you* (so it is in the original) *the spirit, the soul, and the body, shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*: he adds again, *Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it*. He will not only sanctify you wholly, but will preserve you in that state, until he comes to receive you unto himself.

14. Agreeably to this, is the plain matter of fact. Several persons have enjoyed this blessing, without any interruption for many years. Several enjoy it at this day. And not a few have enjoyed it unto their death, as they have declared with their latest breath; calmly witnessing, that GOD had saved them from all sin, till their spirit returned to GOD.

15. As to the whole head of objections taken from experience, I desire it may be observed farther, either the persons

sons objected to, have attained Christian perfection, or they have not. If they have not, whatever objections are brought against them, strike wide of the mark. For they are not the persons we are talking of: therefore whatever they are or do, is beside the question. But if they have attained it, if they answer the description given under the nine preceding articles, no reasonable objection can lie against them. They are superior to all censure. And *every tongue that riseth up against them, will they utterly condemn.*

16. "But I never saw one" (continues the objector) "that answered my idea of perfection." It may be so. And it is probable (as I observed elsewhere) you never will. For your idea includes abundantly too much: even freedom from those infirmities, which are not separable from a spirit that is connected with flesh and blood. But if you keep to the account that is given above, and allow for the weakness of human understanding, you may see at this day undeniable instances of genuine, scriptural perfection.

III. 1. It only remains, in the third place, to expostulate a little with the opposers of this perfection.

Now permit me to ask, Why are you so angry with those who profess to have attained this? and so mad (I cannot give it any softer title) against Christian perfection? against the most glorious gift which GOD ever gave to the children of men upon earth? View it in every one of the preceding points of light, and see what it contains that is either odious or terrible: that is calculated to excite either hatred or fear, in any reasonable creature.

What rational objection can you have, to the loving the Lord your GOD with all your heart? Why should you have any aversion to it? Why should you be afraid of it? Would it do you any hurt? Would it lessen your happiness, either in this world or the world to come? And why should you be unwilling, that others should give him their whole heart? Or that they should love their neighbours as themselves? Yea, *as Christ hath loved us?* Is this detestable? Is it the proper object of hatred? Or is it not the most amiable thing under

under the sun? Is it proper to move terror? Is it not rather desirable in the highest degree?

2. Why are you so averse to having in you the whole *mind which was in Christ Jesus*? All the affections, all the tempers and dispositions which were in him, while he dwelt among men? Why should you be afraid of this? Would it be any worse for you, were GOD to work in you this very hour, all the mind that was in him? If not, why should you hinder others from seeking this blessing? Or be displeased at those who think they have attained it? Is any thing more lovely? Any thing more to be desired by every child of man?

3. Why are you averse to having the whole *fruit of the Spirit*? Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness: fidelity, goodness, temperance? Why should you be afraid of having all these planted in your inmost soul? As *against these there is no law*, so there cannot be any reasonable objection. Surely nothing is more desirable, than that all these tempers should take deep root in your heart: nay, in the hearts of all that name the name of Christ: yea, of all the inhabitants of the earth.

4. What reason have you to be afraid of, or to entertain any aversion to, the being *renewed in the whole image of him that created you*? Is not this more desirable than any thing under heaven? Is it not consummately amiable? What can you wish for in comparison of this, either for your own soul, or for those for whom you entertain the strongest and tenderest affection? And when you enjoy this, what remains, but to be *changed from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord*?

5. Why should you be averse to universal holiness? The same thing under another name. Why should you entertain any prejudice against this, or look upon it with apprehension, whether you understand by that term the being inwardly conformed to the whole image and will of God; or an outward behaviour, in every point suitable to that conformity? Can you conceive any thing more amiable than this? Any thing more desirable? Set prejudice aside, and surely you will desire to see it diffused over all the earth.

6. Is perfection (to vary the expression) the being *sanctified throughout in spirit, soul and body*? What lover of GOD and man can be averse to this, or entertain frightful apprehensions of it? Is it not in your best moments your desire to be all of a piece? All consistent with yourself? "All faith, all meekness, and all love?" And suppose you were once possess of this glorious liberty, would not you wish to continue therein? To be preserved *blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*?

7. For what cause should you that are children of GOD, be averse to or afraid of presenting yourselves, your souls and bodies, as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to GOD? to GOD your creator, your redeemer, your sanctifier? Can any thing be more desirable than this entire self-dedication to him? And is it not your wish that all mankind should unite in this *reasonable service*? Surely no one can be averse to this, without being an enemy to all mankind.

8. And why should you be afraid of or averse to what is naturally implied in this? Namely, the offering up all our thoughts, and words, and actions, as a spiritual sacrifice to GOD, acceptable to him through the blood and intercession of his well-beloved Son? Surely you cannot deny that this is good and profitable to men, as well as pleasing to GOD. Should you not then devoutly pray, that both you and all mankind, may thus worship him in spirit and in truth?

9. Suffer me to ask one question more. Why should any man of reason and religion, be either afraid of, or averse to, salvation from all sin? Is not sin the greatest evil on this side hell? And if so, does it not naturally follow, that an entire deliverance from it is one of the greatest blessings on this side heaven? How earnestly then should it be prayed for by all the children of GOD? By sin I mean, "a voluntary transgression of a known law." Are you averse to being delivered from this? Are you afraid of such a deliverance? Do you then love sin, that you are so unwilling to part with it? Surely no. You do not love either the devil or his works. You rather wish to be totally delivered from them; to have sin rooted out both of your life and your heart.

10. I have

10. I have frequently observed, and not without surprise, that the opposers of perfection are more vehement against it when it is placed in this view, than in any other whatsoever: they will allow all you say of the love of GOD and man; of the mind which was in Christ, of the fruit of the Spirit, of the image of GOD, of universal holiness, of entire self-dedication, of sanctification in spirit, soul, and body: yea, and of the offering up all our thoughts, words, and actions, as a sacrifice to GOD. All this they will allow, so we will allow sin, a little sin, to remain in us till death.

11. Pray compare this with that remarkable passage in *John Bunyan's Holy War*. When *Immanuel*, says he, had driven *Diabolus* and all his forces out of the city of *Man'soul*, *Diabolus* preferred a petition to *Immanuel*, that he might have only a small part of the city. When this was rejected, he begged to have only a little room within the walls. But *Immanuel* answered, "He should have no place in it at all, no, not to rest the sole of his foot."

Had not the good old man forgot himself? Did not the force of truth so prevail over him here, as utterly to overturn his own system? To assert perfection in the clearest manner? For if this is not salvation from sin, I cannot tell what is.

12. "No," says a great man, "this is the error of errors: I hate it from my heart. I pursue it through all the world with fire and sword." Nay, why so vehement? Do you seriously think there is no error under heaven equal to this? Here is something which I cannot understand. Why are those that oppose salvation from sin, few excepted, so eager? I had almost said furious? Are you fighting *pro aris & focis*? For GOD and your country? For all you have in the world? For all that is near and dear unto you? For your liberty? Your life? In GOD's name, why are you so fond of sin? What good has it ever done you? What good is it ever likely to do, either in this world or in the world to come? And why are you so violent against those that hope for deliverance from it? Have patience with us, if we are in an error:
yea,

yea, suffer us to enjoy our error. If we should not attain it, the very expectation of this deliverance gives us present comfort : Yea, and ministers strength, to resist those enemies which we expect to conquer. If you could persuade us to despair of that victory, we should give over the contest. Now we are *saved by hope* : from this very hope a degree of salvation springs. Be not angry at those who are

Felices errore suo :

Happy in their mistake. Else, be their opinion right or wrong, your temper is undeniably sinful : bear then with *us*, as we do with *you* : and see whether the Lord will not deliver us ? Whether he is not able, yea, and willing to save them to the uttermost that come unto GOD through him ?

Tunbridge-Wells, Dec. 6, 1784.



THE EXPERIENCE OF

ELIZABETH JACKSON.

June 18, 1764.

I Am not understood, for want of knowing how to explain myself. This causes some to say, my experience is not scriptural, because I have no complaints. But I know, I am approved of GOD every moment. I find my nature is changed ; my heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, and cleansed from all unrighteousness. GOD has washed me with pure water, and I find, all I do or say is sanctified. But when I say, I am perfectly happy, lacking nothing, many are offended. They ask me if I want no more faith : and I know not how to answer them. But I feel the atoning blood of Christ applied to me every moment. This causes my joys to flow as a river, and makes me rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.

I find

I find my soul in one continual flame. I have liberty of spirit: Christ has freed me from every entanglement below: Christ sits on my heart, and feeds my soul, and consumes all my enemies. I find nothing within, but a sweet serenity and harmony of love. My rest is in GOD: my heart is stilled, and my life is one continual looking up to him. The Spirit is quick and powerful, and testifies that the work is finished. My evidence of it is as clear as the sun in the firmament. I see myself and my performances less than nothing; but GOD looks upon me in Christ. I find "my every act, word, thought, is love." My every breath ascends to the throne of grace, and returns pure to my heart. My soul is watered every moment: the Spirit ascendeth and descendeth, and ceaseth not. My heart is as wax before the fire, ready to be dissolved and be no more. The glorious weight of the power of GOD shakes this earthly tabernacle. Every sinew is as unstrung: every cord unloosed: my body stands as in a totter. A little more of the fire of GOD's love, and it will drive the spirit hence. I thirst for nothing but to see GOD. Yet my joys increase and abound, and are maintained every moment, I know not how; only it is by faith in the Son of GOD. He is ever with me; therefore nothing discomposes my mind; but should he withdraw, I should faint. For I have no strength: and I rely on nothing but the promises of GOD: who, I believe, *has* saved my soul, and *will* save me for ever.

AN

AN EXTRACT

Of the Revd. Mr. JOHN WESLEY's JOURNAL,

From August 12th, 1738, to November 1st, 1739.

[Continued from page 339.]

IN the evening, while I was declaring that Jesus Christ had given himself a ransom for all, three persons almost at once, sunk down as dead, having all their sins set in array before them. But in a short time they were raised up, and knew that *the Lamb of GOD who taketh away the sin of the world*, had taken away their sins.

Sunday 13. I began expounding in the morning, the xiiiith chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*. At *Hannam* I farther explained the promise given by faith; as I did also at *Rose-green*. At *Clifton* it pleased GOD to assist me greatly, in speaking on those words, *He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whoso drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: But the water which I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.*

My ordinary employment (in public) was now as follows: Every morning I read prayers and preached at *Newgate*. Every evening I expounded a portion of scripture, at one, or more of the societies. On *Monday* in the afternoon I preached abroad near *Bristol*; on *Tuesday* at *Bath* and *Two mile hill* alternately. On *Wednesday* at *Baptist-mills*. Every other *Thursday* near *Pennsford*. Every other *Friday* in another part of *Kingswood*. On *Saturday* in the afternoon and *Sunday* morning, in the *Bowling-green* (which lies near the middle of the city.) On *Sunday* at eleven near *Hannam-Mount*. At two at *Clifton*, and at five on *Rose-green*. And hitherto, *as my day is, so my strength hath been.*

Tuesday 15. As I was expounding in the *Back-lane*, on the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, many who had before been righteous in their own eyes, abhorred themselves

themselves as in dust and ashes. But two, who seemed to be more deeply convinced than the rest, did not long sorrow as men without hope; but found in that hour, that they had *an advocate with the Father*; Jesus Christ the righteous: As did three others in *Gloucester-lane* the evening before, and three at *Baldwin-street* this evening. About ten, two who after having seen a great light, had again reasoned themselves into darkness, came to us heavy laden. We cried to GOD, and they were again *filled with peace and joy in believing*.

Wednesday 16. While I was declaring at *Baptist-mills*; He was wounded for our transgressions, a middle aged man began violently beating his breast, and crying to him by *whose stripes we are healed*. During our prayer, GOD put a new song in his mouth. Some mocked, and others owned the hand of GOD. Particularly a woman of *Baptist-mills*, who was now convinced of her own want of an advocate with GOD, and went home full of anguish, but was in a few hours filled with joy, knowing he had *blotted out all her transgressions*.

[Continued at page 435.]

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF

THE REVEREND JOHN FLETCHER.

[Continued from page 348.]

5. **T**HE proposal was as follows. "Our national depravity turns greatly on these two hinges, The profanation of the Lord's day, and the neglect of the education of children. Till some way is found of stopping up these two great inlets of wickedness, we must expect to see our workhouses filled with aged parents, forsaken by their prodigal children, with wives forsaken by their faithless husbands, and with the wretched offspring of lewd women, and
drunken

drunken men. Nay, we may expect to see the gaols and even the gallows largely stocked (to the perpetual reproach of our nation) with unhappy wretches, ready to fall a sacrifice to the laws of their country. "It is a common observation (says Dr. Gibson, late bishop of London) that public criminals, when they come to their unhappy end, and make their dying declarations to the world, generally charge the sinful courses in which they have lived, to the *neglect and abuse of the Lord's day*, as the first occasion of leading them into all other wickedness. And considering how frequently these declarations are repeated, and how many other instances of the same kind, though less public, are notorious enough to those who will observe them; they may well be a warning to us, to consider a religious observation of the Lord's day as the best preservative of virtue and religion, and the neglect and profanation of it as the greatest inlet to vice and wickedness."

6. "A pious clergyman farther observes, The want of education in children, is one of the principal causes of the misery of families, cities and nations; ignorance, vice and misery being constant companions. The hardest heart must melt at the melancholy sight of such a number of children, both male and female, who live in gross ignorance and habitual profanation of the Lord's day. What crowds fill the streets and fields, tempting each other to idleness, lewdness, and every other species of wickedness? Is it any wonder we should have so many undutiful children, unfaithful apprentices, disobedient servants, untrusty workmen, disloyal subjects, and bad members of society? Whence so much rapine, fornication and blasphemy? Do not all these evils center in *ignorance and contempt of the Lord's day*? And shall we do nothing to check these growing evils?"

7. "Persons concerned for the welfare of the next generation, and well-wishers to church and state, have already set us a fair example in *Stroud, Gloucester, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Bristol*, and many country parishes. They have attempted to remedy these evils by setting up Sunday-schools, which by keeping children from corrupting one another,

ther, by promoting their attendance on divine worship, and by planting the first principles of useful knowledge in their minds and of piety in their hearts, bid fair for a public reformation of their manners, and for nipping in the bud the ignorance and impiety which is every where so common among the lower and more numerous classes of people."

8. The proposals concerning Sunday-schools in the parish of *Madeley*, were as follows :

I. It is proposed, That Sunday-schools be set up in this parish, for such children as are employed all the week, and for those whose education has been hitherto totally neglected.

II. That the children admitted into these, be taught reading, writing, and the principles of religion.

III. That there be a school for boys and another for girls, in *Madeley*, *Madeley-Wood*, and *Coalbrook-Dale*, six in all.

IV. That a subscription be opened, to pay each teacher one shilling per Sunday, and to buy tables, forms, books, pens and ink.

V. That two treasurers be appointed to ask and receive the contributions of the subscribers.

VI. That whoever subscribes one guinea a year shall be a governor.

VII. That three or four inspectors be appointed, who are to visit the schools once a week, to see that the children attend regularly, and the masters do their duty.

VIII. That a book be provided, for setting down all receipts and expences ; and another, for the names of the teachers and the scholars.

IX. That the schools be solemnly visited once or twice a year : and a premium given to the children that have made the greatest improvement.

9. As to the success of his unwearied labours, although he was much discouraged when he first returned from abroad, finding so many of those who had once run well, grown weary and faint in their mind : yet it was not long before he found fresh cause to rejoice, and to know, that GOD was with him of a truth. It was not long before he ob-

served that a general reformation had taken place in the parish. And it was not only an outward reformation, even of many that had been notorious for all manner of wickedness, but an inward also; many, both young and old, having learned to worship *GOD in spirit and in truth*. A considerable number of these still mourn, as sheep bereaved of their shepherd. And yet one cannot doubt, but a still larger company of his own children have hailed him on the celestial shore. But the season is coming, when all secrets shall be laid open; and all the jewels of his crown shall be made manifest in that day.

• 10. One instance of the success of his ministry he mentioned some years since at *Bristol*. "One Sunday," said he, "when I had done reading prayers at *Madeley*, I went up into the pulpit, intending to preach a sermon, which I had prepared for that purpose. But my mind was so confused, that I could not recollect either my text or any part of my sermon. I was afraid I should be obliged to come down without saying any thing. But having recollected myself a little, I thought I would say something on the first lesson, which was the third chapter of *Daniel*, containing the account of the three children cast into the fiery furnace: I found in doing it such an extraordinary assistance from *GOD*, and such a peculiar enlargement of heart, that I supposed there must be some peculiar cause for it. I therefore desired, if any of the congregation found any thing particular, they would acquaint me with it in the ensuing week.

"In consequence of this, the Wednesday after, a woman came, and gave me the following account. I have been for some time much concerned about my soul; I have attended the church at all opportunities, and have spent much time in private prayer. At this my husband (who is a butcher) has been exceedingly enraged, and threatened me severely what he would do, if I did not leave off going to *John Fletcher's church*: yea, if I dared to go any more to any religious meetings whatsoever. When I told him, I could not in conscience refrain from going, at least to our parish church, he grew quite outrageous, and swore dreadfully

fully, if I went any more, he would cut my throat as soon as I came home. This made me cry mightily to GOD, that he would support me in the trying hour. And though I did not feel any great degree of comfort, yet having a sure confidence in GOD, I determined to go on in my duty, and leave the event to him. Last Sunday, after many struggles with the devil and my own heart, I came down stairs ready for church. My husband asked me, whether I was resolved to go thither? I told him I was. Well then, said he, I shall not (as I intended) cut your throat, but I will heat the oven and throw you into it, the moment you come home. Notwithstanding this threatening, which he enforced with many bitter oaths, I went to church, praying all the way, that GOD would strengthen me to suffer whatever might befall me. While you were speaking of the three children whom *Nebuchadnezzar* cast into the burning fiery furnace, I found it all belonged to me, and GOD applied every word to my heart. And when the sermon was ended, I thought, if I had a thousand lives, I could lay them all down for GOD. I felt my whole soul so filled with his love, that I hastened home fully determined to give myself to whatsoever GOD pleased: nothing doubting, but that either he would take me to heaven, if he suffered me to burn to death, or that he would some way deliver me, even as he did his three *servants that trusted in him*. When I got almost to our own door, I saw the flames issuing out of the mouth of the oven. And I expected nothing else, but that I should be thrown into it immediately. I felt my heart rejoice, that if it were so, the will of the Lord would be done. I opened the door, and to my utter astonishment saw my husband upon his knees, wrestling with GOD in prayer for the forgiveness of his sins. He caught me in his arms, earnestly begged my pardon, and has continued diligently seeking GOD ever since. I now know why my sermon was taken from me, namely, that GOD might thus magnify his mercy."

11. Many were the dangers he went through in the course of his ministry; but the Lord delivered him out of all.

all. One of these Mrs. Fletcher relates in the following words.

"My husband having appointed to preach one Sunday at a church about fourteen miles off, I felt some concern for his riding so far, and doing the whole Sunday's duty twice: especially as it was necessary for him to return home the same night. The evening being exceeding dark and wet, I was strongly led to commend him to GOD in prayer. While I was doing this, it was suggested to me, that his horse was fallen, and had thrown him over his head: and the whole scene appeared to be clearly represented before my eyes. "My GOD," said I, "he is thine. His life, his limbs, his health are all thine! I commit him to thee by faith." Immediately that word was impressed on my heart, *The righteous is in the hand of the Lord: and there shall no evil touch him.* And it filled my soul with such a sweetness, that I could feel no fear. The night was uncommonly bad, which occasioned many friends to continue with me. And while they expressed their great uneasiness at his staying two hours longer than we could well account for, I was obliged to hide the calmness I felt by silence, lest some should have supposed it insensibility.* At last he came well, and praising GOD; but asked for water to wash himself, because his horse had fallen, and thrown him with great force over his head. Yet, glory be to GOD, he was no way hurt, except having a little skin grazed from one of his fingers. As he set the Lord always before him, so he found his help in every time of need."

12. The laying the foundation of the Sunday-schools at Madley, was the last public work in which he was employed. But as the liberal man is ever devising liberal things, he had several plans in his mind for preserving a great number of desolate children, brought up only to beg and steal. Such this populous parish, (and indeed most others) afford in great abundance. He had likewise proposed writing va-

* Nay, I would have proclaimed it aloud, giving the glory to GOD, for the comfort of all that were present.

rious little tracts* for the use of the schools. But he who cannot err, saw good to call his servant hence to *enjoy*, rather than leave him here to *do* and *suffer*.

C H A P. IX.

His Character.

1. **I** Am sensible, it is the method of almost all writers, to place the character of a man at the conclusion of his life. But there seems to be a particular reason for varying from the usual practice in this place. The death of Mr. Fletcher (hardly to be paralleled in the present century) was so uncommon a display of the power and goodness of GOD in behalf of his highly favoured servant, that it is not proper for any thing to come after it. It must needs therefore close the whole account.

2. From even the imperfect account, which has been given of this great and good man, any discerning person may with very little difficulty extract his character. In general, it is easy to perceive, that a more excellent man has not appeared in the church for many ages. It is true, in several ages, and in several countries, many men have excelled in particular virtues and graces. But who can point out in any age or nation, one that so highly excelled in all? One that was enabled in so large a measure to *put on the whole armour of GOD*? Yea, so to *put on Christ*, as to *perfect holiness in the fear of GOD*.

3. Yet there is a peculiar difficulty in giving a full account of either his life or character, because we have scarce any light from himself. He was upon all occasions very uncommonly reserved in speaking of himself, whether in writing or conversation. He hardly ever said any thing concerning himself, unless it slipped from him unawares. And among the great number of papers which he has left, there

* I do not regret his not writing those tracts: because I despair of seeing any in the English tongue superior to those tracts from *Abbe Fleury* and *Mr. Poirer*, published under the title of "Instructions for children." I have never yet seen any thing comparable to them, either for depth of sense, or plainness of language.

there is scarce a page, (except that singular account of his conversion to GOD) relative either to his own inward experience, or the transactions of his life. So that the most of the information we have, is gathered up, either from short hints scattered up and down in his letters, from what he had occasionally dropped among his friends, or from what one and another remembered concerning him. Herein he did not attend to that wise remark of the ancient writers, (exactly agreeable to various passages that occur in the canonical scriptures) *It is good to conceal the secrets of a king, but to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord.*

4. This defect was indeed in some measure supplied, by the intire intimacy which subsisted between him and Mrs. Fletcher. He did not willingly, much less designedly, conceal any thing from her. They had no secrets with regard to each other; but had indeed one house, one purse, and one heart. Before her it was his invariable rule, to *think aloud*: always to open the window in his breast. And to this we are indebted for the knowledge of many particulars, which must otherwise have been buried in oblivion.

5. But whatever the materials were, however compleat our informations, yet I am thoroughly sensible of my own inability to draw such a portrait as Mr. Fletcher deserves. I have no turn at all for panegyric: I have never accustomed myself to it. It gives me therefore no small satisfaction to find, that this is in a great measure done to my hands. The picture is already drawn; and that by no mean pencil. All then which I shall attempt is, to retouch Mrs. Fletcher's observations, and now and then to add a few articles, either from my own knowledge or from the information of others.

9. The following are mostly her own words, for where they are clear and expressive, as they generally are, I do not think it right to alter them for altering sake.

"Whatever he might be with regard to *charity*, said she, he was no less eminent for his spirit of *faith*. Indeed he was not so much led by sights or impressions (which many mistake for faith) as abundance of people have been; but by a steady,

a steady, firm reliance upon the love and truth and faithfulness of GOD. His ardent desire was, so to believe, as to be a partaker of all the great and precious promises : to be a witness of all that mind which was in Christ Jesus. And being conscious that he must be crucified with his Master, or never reign with him, he gave himself up to him, whom he continually set before him, to lie in his hand as the passive clay. He would often say, ' It is my business in all events, to hang upon the Lord, with a sure trust and confidence that he will order all things in the best time and manner. Indeed it would be nothing to be a believer, nay, in truth, there would be no room for faith, if every thing were seen here. But against hope to believe in hope, to have a full confidence in that unseen power, which so mightily supports us in all our dangers and difficulties, this is the believing which is acceptable to GOD.' Sometimes when I have expressed some apprehension of an approaching trial, he would answer, I do not doubt but the Lord orders all : therefore I leave every thing to him. In outward dangers, if they were ever so great, he seemed to know no shadow of fear. When I was speaking once concerning a danger, to which we were then particularly exposed, he answered, I know GOD always gives his angels charge concerning us : therefore we are equally safe every where.

Not less eminent than his faith was his *humility*. Amidst all his laying himself out for GOD, and for the good of souls, he ever preserved that special grace, the making no account of his own labours. He held himself and his own abilities in very low esteem ; and seemed to have that word continually before his eyes, " I am an unprofitable servant." And this humility was so rooted in him, as to be moved by no affront. I have seen many, even of the most provoking kind, offered him ; but he received them as his *proper portion* : being so far from desiring the honour which cometh of men, that he took pleasure in being little and unknown. Perhaps it might appear from some passages of his life, that in this he even leaned to an extreme. For genuine humility does not require, that any man should *desire to be despised*. Nay
we

we are to avoid it, so far as we possibly can, consistently with a good conscience; for that direction, *Let no man despise thee*, concerns every man as well as *Timothy*.

"It is rare to meet with an eminent person that can bear an equal. But it was his choice and delight, to prefer every one to himself. And this he did in so free and easy a manner, that in him it appeared perfectly natural. He never willingly suffered any unkindness shewn to him to be mentioned again; and if it was, he generally answered, "O let it drop; we will offer it in silence to the Lord." And indeed the best way of bearing crosses, is to consecrate all in silence to GOD.

"From this root of humility sprung such a *patience*, as I wish I could either describe or imitate. It produced in him a most ready mind, which embraced every cross with alacrity and pleasure. For the good of his neighbour, nothing seemed hard, nothing wearisome. Sometimes I have been grieved to call him out of his study two or three times in an hour: especially when he was engaged in composing some of his deepest works. But he would answer, with his usual sweetness, "O my dear, never think of that. It matters not, if we are but always ready to meet the will of GOD." It is conformity to the will of GOD that alone makes an employment excellent. He never thought any thing too mean, but sin; he looked on nothing else as beneath his character. If he overtook a poor man or woman on the road with a burden too heavy for them, he did not fail to offer his assistance to bear part of it. And he would not easily take a denial. This therefore he has frequently done.

"In bearing pain he was most exemplary, and continued more and more so to the last. Nor in the most humbling part of the ministry, was his coming down to the capacities of the ignorant the least excellency. Nevertheless he had a most resolute courage in the reproving of sin. To daring sinners he was a son of thunder; and no worldly considerations were regarded, whenever he believed GOD had given him a message to deliver to any of them.

[Continued at page 443.]

The JOURNAL of FRANCIS ASBURY, *Bishop of the
Methodist-Episcopal Church.*

From March 26, 1772, to April 14, 1773.

(Continued from page 354.)

TUESDAY 29. At Mr. *Sinclair's*, found great peace of mind, and, thanks be to GOD, had power in preaching, though the people were dead and stupid. The next day at Mr. *Chamberlain's*, I had many people, and preached with freedom; then went to *Galloway's*, where we had great consolation.

January 1, 1773. My body has been weak for some time, but my mind has enjoyed a good degree of peace; and I have a strong desire to be kept in the meekness of Jesus Christ. My heart has been affected by reading, lately, part of *Sewal's* history of the Quakers. How great was the spirit of persecution in *New-England*, when some were imprisoned, some had their ears cut off, and some were hanged! O that our GOD would arise, and bow the nations to himself!

January 2. After preaching to several people, at *John Murray's*, a new place, then rode back to Mr. *Colegate's*, and preached in the evening.

January 3. Rode to *Baltimore* and had a large congregation at the house of Captain *Patten*, at the *Point*. Many of the principal people were there; and the Lord enabled me to speak with freedom and power. At night, I preached in town. The house was well filled with people, and we have a comfortable hope the work of the Lord will revive in this place. Bless the Lord, O ye saints! Holiness is the element of my soul. My earnest prayer is, that nothing contrary to holiness may live in me.

Monday 4. Rode to *S. Stevenson's*, found life in my soul, and was much affected in preaching to the people. Then met and regulated the class. Tuesday 5. They were kind enough to offer me the court-house in town; but judging

it unfit, I preached in another house; then met the society and settled a class of men. Wed. 6. We had a pretty good gathering at *N. P—'s*, about 6 miles from town. Then rode back to town, and after preaching with comfort in the evening, I formed a class of women.

Thursday 7. Rose with a determination to live more to GOD. Preached twice in the country, met two classes and settled them as well as I could. The class at Mr. *Simms's* were lively and had the power of GOD among them. They were the fruit of *Nathan P—'s* labours; and many of them could give a good account of their experience.

Friday 8. My mind is fixed on GOD. I both desire and purpose to exercise fasting, prayer and faith. After some exercise of mind, the Lord enabled me to preach with life and power at Mr. *Merryman's*, from these words, *Be not ye partakers with them*. I shewed First, whom the words were spoken to. Secondly, with whom they were not to be partakers. Thirdly, how they were not to partake with them, viz. In spirit—in judgment—in practice.

Lord's day, *January 10*. Many people attended at *Joseph Presbury's*, to whom I preached twice, with some life, and then went 3 miles into the Neck; and felt much power while preaching on perfect love. The more I speak on this subject, the more my soul is filled and drawn out in love. This doctrine has a great tendency to prevent people from settling on their lees.

Monday 11. Preached with great plainness to many people at *Daniel Ruff's*, and then rode to Mr. *Dellam's*.

Tuesday 12. Rode to *Moses Brown's*, but as they had no previous notice, we collected but few. However, I preached, and afterwards returned to Mr. *Dellam's*, and preached to his family.

Thursday 13. It was late before I reached *Samuel Ltiten's*, and as there was much rain and snow, the company was small. Young Doctor *A—s* took me home with him. The young man, with his sister and mother seemed tender, but his father appeared to be a stiff old man, and I did by no means like his spirit.

Friday

Friday 14. Many people attended preaching at S. F—'s. I was shut up in speaking, but found peace in my mind, and afterwards rode home with friend *Preston*.

Saturday 15. This morning, I rose to glorify GOD, with a determination to do his will, and that only; to be wholly devoted to the Lord, in spirit, soul and body. Many people came to hear the word of life to-day, though it was very cold.

Lord's day 16. Preaching to-day, at friend *Preston's*, on the barren fig-tree, I first shewed that it was applicable to the Jews, and secondly to the Protestant church; at the same time described the barren fig-tree as—one without leaves—or, one without blossoms—or, one without fruit—or, one that did not bear so much fruit as another might bear.—I then rode to *J. Dellam's*, and preached to his family with a few others. On Monday, but few people attended at *Bond's*; and in the evening I preached at Mr. *Duke's*, but was shut up. The next day many country-people came to hear the word at *Joppa*, though but few from the town. There are about forty houses in this town, and it stands on a neck of land near the water; but the people seem to be buried in trade, sensuality and superstition.

Wednesday 19. The weather being cold, there were but few at *James Baker's*; nevertheless I preached and found peace, power and love—If Israel be not gathered, yet I hope to be the Lord's.

Tuesday 20. After preaching with liberty at Mr. *Chamberlain's*, I went to *Aquilla Galloway's*, and found life in preaching there. The next day, at *John Murray's*, I preached to a stupid company, and then rode to *John Colegate's*, where I was favoured with liberty in dispensing the blessed word. My soul felt life also in the evening at *Joshua Owen's*. How pleasant and profitable it is to feel spiritual life in public exercises! Saturday I rode to *Baltimore* and had a large congregation.

Lord's day 23. I preached twice at the *Point*, and once in town. On Monday my heart felt great sorrow. This day

day I wrote to my mother, and in the evening found great consolation.

Tuesday 25. My mind was wholly given up to GOD, and I have a great hope that the gospel will yet spread in this town. On Wednesday there was a moving among the people while I preached at *Nathan Perrigo's*; and afterwards returning to town, preached in the evening. On Thursday I felt power and life in my soul, while preaching to a large number of people at Mr. *Gatch's*. On Friday I preached in the Neck and at *Joppa*.

Saturday 29. Perceiving the great wickedness of the people who were swearing and drinking in a tavern, great struggles arose in my mind about preaching there; however, I broke through every difficulty, and felt both life and power in dispensing the word among them.

Lord's day 30. This was a day of power and comfort. I rode to *Joseph Presbury's*, preached three times and met the classes. Many of the people, through grace, were able to give a good account of their experience.

February 1. Was favoured with freedom in preaching to a number of people at *Daniel Ruff's*; and my mind has been kept in purity and peace.

Tuesday 2. Was greatly assisted in preaching to-day, both at *Swan-Creek* and Mr. *Dellam's*. The next morning I breakfasted with *Richard Dellam*, and found that he was very fond of Mr. *Law's* works. He treated me with great kindness. After preaching and meeting the society at the ferry, I went to *J. G——'s*, a man much talked of for his overreaching and unjust dealing; but what he is I know not. In principle he appeared to be a *Quaker*. He was much troubled with the gout, which he told me his father had before him. He said, his father cured himself of the gout by milk and moderate diet; but threw himself into a dropsy. On Thursday, after preaching at *Deer-Creek*, I rode to *B. Preston's*. My present purpose is to put all the people who are fit for it into bands.

Friday 5. Many people attended at *Forward's*, and my soul was alive in preaching to them. I then rode back

to *B. Preston's*, and put the people into bands as I had designed.

Saturday 6. My mind was calm and serene this morning. I preached with some power, and we had a comfortable meeting. *William Duke*, a lad about 16 or 17 years of age, exhorted the people. He seems to be a promising youth, and I gave him a licence to exhort.

Lord's day 7. Some great critics attended at the preaching-house to-day, but I preached twice, and spoke freely.

Monday 8. Though the weather was very cold, I went to *William Bond's*, and enforced on a dull congregation, these awful words of our Lord, *What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.* I went afterwards to the widow *Bond's*, and spoke closely to the girls, who appeared to be somewhat serious.

Tuesday 9. After preaching to more people than usual at *Aquilla Stamford's*, I went to *Baker's* in the evening, and both met the class and formed some bands. I also gave them a copy of the proper deed for securing their preaching-house.

Wednesday 10. I went to *C——'s* and preached. This perhaps will be the last time, for it is a disorderly house. I then went to *Aquilla Galloway's*, and preached with some comfort. There is room to hope that the Lord will do something for the people here.

Thursday 11. The congregation was large at *John Murray's*, and I preached with plainness and power, so that the sleepy people seemed to awake. I then went back to *Colegate's*, and preached with some satisfaction; but Satan was close at my heels; however, the Lord gave me power to resist him.

Friday 12. The Lord enables me to stand fast in the midst of temptations. My soul possesses inward and spiritual power. Many people attended preaching to-day at *Joshua Owen's*; I afterwards met the class, and then gave an exhortation in the evening.

Lord's day 14. Many country people came to hear the word of GOD at the *Point*; some came 12 miles before those

those of the town had left their houses; perhaps before some of them had left their beds. I found some life and power in preaching both at the *Point* and in *Baltimore*.

Monday 15. Rose this morning with holy thoughts of GOD; and we had a good time in public worship.

Wednesday 17. I preached and met the society; and employed Mr. *Moreton* to draw up a deed for the house in *Gun-powder Neck*.

Thursday 18. Preached with power, both at *Nathan Perrigo's* and Mr. *Gatch's*.

Friday 19. A few people attended at Mr. *Merryman's*; going afterwards about 4 miles to Mr. *D—'s*, I preached and met the society; most of them appeared to be under a good work of grace.

Lord's day 21. The weather was excessively severe, yet many people came to hear the word at *J. Presbury's*. I rode about 6 or 7 miles to preach in the *Neck*, but never felt colder weather. The water froze as it run from the horse's nostrils; and a friend said, the water froze as it came from his eyes. However, after preaching to a few people, I returned.

Monday 22. I had 16 miles to ride to preach to a few people, and 5 more to *Josiah Dellam's* to get my dinner. I have suffered a little by lodging in open houses this cold weather, but this is a very small thing when compared to what the dear Redeemer suffered for the salvation of precious souls.

Tuesday 23. Glory to GOD! I had peace, and power, and love.

Wednesday 24. After preaching with plainness to a considerable number of people, I then went to *Josiah Dellam's*, where many people attended, and we had a comfortable time. My old opponent, Mr. *Evans*, met me here, but he did not appear so forward as he had been. I rode thence to *Rocky-run*, and preached there with satisfaction. Mr. *Giles* and his wife treated me with great kindness.

Thursday 25. I had a good time and many people at Mr. *L—'s*. Two letters came to hand to-day, one from *York*,
and

and one from *Philadelphia*. They intreat me to return, and inform me that trouble is at hand. But I cannot fear while my heart is upright with GOD. I seek nothing but him; and fear nothing but his displeasure.

[Continued at page 453.]

THOUGHTS upon METHODISM.

1. I AM not afraid, that the people called Methodists, should ever cease to exist either in *Europe* or *America*. But I am afraid, lest they should exist only as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit and discipline, with which they first set out.

2. What was their fundamental doctrine? That the bible was the whole and sole rule both of christian faith and practice. Hence they learned, 1. That religion is an inward principle: that it is no other than the mind that was in Christ: or in other words, the renewal of the soul after the image of GOD, in righteousness and true holiness: 2. That this can never be wrought in us, but by the power of the Holy Ghost: 3. That we receive this and every other blessing, merely for the sake of Christ; and, 4. That whoever hath the mind that was in Christ, the same is our brother, and sister, and mother.

3. In the year 1729, four young students in *Oxford*, agreed to spend their evenings together. They were all zealous members of the church of England, and had no peculiar opinions, but were distinguished only by their constant attendance on the church and sacrament. In 1735, they were increased to fifteen: when the chief of them embarked for *America*, intending to preach to the heathen *Indians*. Methodism then seemed to die away: but it revived again in the year 1738. Especially after Mr. *Wesley* (not being allowed to preach in the churches) began to preach

preach in the fields. One and another then coming to enquire, what they must do to be saved? He desired them to meet him all together, which they did, and increased continually in number. In November, a large building, the Foundery, being offered him, he began preaching therein, morning and evening; at five in the morning, and seven in the evening, that the people's labour might not be hindered.

4. From the beginning, the men and women sat apart, as they always did in the primitive church. And none were suffered to call any place their own, but the first comers sat down first. They had no pews; and all the benches for rich and poor, were of the same construction. Mr. *Wesley* began the service with a short prayer; then sung a hymn and preached, (usually about half an hour) then sang a few verses of another hymn, and concluded with prayer. His constant doctrine was, salvation by faith, preceded by repentance, and followed by holiness.

5. But when a large number of people was joined, the great difficulty was, to keep them together. For they were continually scattering hither and thither, and we knew no way to help it. But GOD provided for this also, when we thought not of it. A year or two after, Mr. *Wesley* met the chief of the society in *Bristol*, and enquired, "How shall we pay the debt upon the preaching-house?" Captain *Foy* stood up and said, "Let every one in the society give a penny a week and it will easily be done." "But many of them," said one, "have not a penny to give." "True," said the captain, "then put ten or twelve of them to me. Let each of these give what they can weekly, and I will supply what is wanting." Many others made the same offer. So Mr. *Wesley* divided the societies among them: assigning a *class* of about twelve persons, to each of these who were termed *Leaders*.

6. Not long after one of these informed Mr. *Wesley*, that calling on such an one in his house, he found him quarrelling with his wife. Another was found in drink. It immediately struck into Mr. *Wesley's* mind, this is the
very

very thing we wanted. The *Leaders* are the persons, who may not only receive the contributions, but also watch over the souls of their brethren. The society in *London* being informed of this, willingly followed the example of that in *Bristol*. As did every society from that time, whether in *Europe* or *America*. By this means it was easily found, if any grew weary or faint, help was speedily administered.

And if any walked disorderly, they were quickly discovered, and either amended or dismissed.

7. For those who knew in whom they had believed, there was another help provided. Five or six, either married or single men, met together at such an hour as was convenient, according to the direction of St. *James*, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." And five or six of the married or single women met together for the same purpose. Innumerable blessings have attended this institution, especially in those who were *going on to perfection*. When any seemed to have attained this, they were allowed to meet with a select number, who appeared, so far as man could judge, to be partakers of the same *great salvation*.

8. From this short sketch of Methodism (so called) any man of understanding may easily discern, that it is only plain scriptural religion, guarded by a few prudential regulations. The essence of it is holiness of heart and life: the circumstances all point to this. And as long as they are joined together in the people called Methodists, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. But if ever the circumstantial parts are despised, the essential will soon be lost. And if ever the essential parts should evaporate, what remains will be dung and dross.

9. It nearly concerns us to understand how the case stands with us at present. I fear, wherever riches have increased (exceeding few are the exceptions) the essence of religion, the mind that was in Christ, has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and fru-

gality. And these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase, so will pride, anger, and the love of the world in all its branches.

10. How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, the religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay-tree, should continue in this state? for the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal: consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionably increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.

11. Is there no way to prevent this? This continual declension of pure religion? We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal: we *must* exhort all christians, to gain all they can by honest industry, and to save all they can: that is, in effect, to grow rich. What way then (I ask again) can we take, that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who *gain all they can*, and *save all they can*, will likewise *give all they can*, then the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace, and the more they will lay up in heaven.

London, August 4, 1786.



An account of Mrs. SPENCER, who died January 16, 1787.

[Written by her late husband.]

THE Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away my dear wife. Yea, she that never gave me an angry word, nor so much as the shadow of an angry look, is now numbered among the dead! My loss is so truly great, that I am sure none but GOD can repair it. But I submit. Father, thy will be done!

Under

Under her great affliction she set such an example of patience and resignation, as is seldom seen. And as she lived so she died, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

A little before her departure, she said, "I hear such delightful music, as is beyond the power of any mortal to describe!" and then in a rapture cried out, "See! GOD is so good, as to send his angels to take care of me! See! see! O the great goodness of GOD to me!" After this she lay still awhile, and then fell asleep in the arms of Jesus.

As to her character, it may be truly said, she was one of the excellent of the earth. She took great delight in private prayer, and often retired to pour out her soul before GOD. Her reverence for his word was such, that she seldom read it but on her knees. She frequently rose at midnight to praise GOD, be the weather cold or hot. She took great delight in visiting the sick, and the distressed, and in relieving them according to her ability: but she took care to go no where, at any time, without a probability either of getting or doing good.

I cannot recollect that she ever missed any public ordinances, be the weather ever so severe.

And as to evil-speaking, I never heard her once utter a disrespectful word of any one; and when others did, she reproved them in good earnest, and at the same time with the utmost meekness: saying, "Are you doing to that person what you would he should do unto you? Have you forgot what the Holy Ghost says by St. James, *Brethren, speak not evil one of another.*"

Thus she lived, and died, holy in all manner of conversation, as he who had called her is holy.

JOHN SPENCER.

Thorn:, Feb. 7, 1787.

A short

A short Account of Miss SARAH BUTLER.

THE subject of the following observations being little known, it was not her desire that any thing should be said concerning her. But in an age when early piety is too seldom seen, whenever there is any appearance thereof, it should not be wholly overlooked, since GOD does not light a candle to put it under a bushel.

Sarah Butler was born in the year 1769; and though for the first eight years of her life nothing remarkable occurred; yet she passed that period in great simplicity: seldom giving her parents any uneasiness by her undutifulness.

Her religious concern began at the time *Mr. Broadbent* instructed the children weekly: which she has since mentioned with great delight.

Early in the last spring, as her disorder increased, her sense of sin increased also; which made her very earnest with GOD in seeking a sense of his favour: and it was not long before he answered her in the joy of her heart.

From the time she first knew the forgiving love of GOD, she retained such a growing confidence in him, that no suggestion of satan could shake it for any long continuance. Hence, if at any time she perceived her mother troubled, she would remind her that GOD had promised to provide for those that love and serve him: hence also arose her patience under the most violent pains which she often endured.

For the last few months of her life, she enjoyed close communion with GOD, and could approach him with a great degree of holy boldness, on all occasions.

The fear of death, for some time before her departure, was so entirely taken away, that the nearer she saw it approach, the stronger was her confidence in GOD.

The evening before her departure she spoke of the love of Christ in a manner very affecting.—“O, said she, if I was an impenitent sinner now, what would become of me! what should I do! But I am washed in the blood of Jesus, and shall soon be with him: O what a precious Saviour he is!

No

No tongue can tell how I love him for what he has done and suffered for me ! He was spit upon and crowned with thorns ! He was nailed to the cross, and at last was crucified, that I might be saved ! And glory be to his name, I am saved ! I know that my Redeemer liveth ! Come Lord Jesus ! Come quickly ! Make no delay ! O what love I feel ! And what a heaven do I behold ready to receive me ! O how I long to be gone, and leave this body, this world and all that is in it behind !"—After this she lay still awhile, and then (*May 10, 1786*) fell asleep in Jesus, having just entered the seventeenth year of her age.

Poetry.

A FUNERAL HYMN.

" **W**HY do thy chariot-wheels delay ?"
 The gracious suff'rer cries,
 " Why thus drag on ? Lord, haste away,
 " And bear me to the skies."

Blest are the dead, who in the Lord
 Their Saviour, sweetly rest ;
 Sav'd from their toils, to bliss restor'd,
 An heav'n in Jesu's breast.

That bliss is thine, the struggle's o'er,
 Th' unfetter'd spirit's fled ;
 The body, rack'd with pain no more,
 Lies number'd with the dead.

Chasten'd by sharp affliction's rod,
 Faith answers, all is right ;

It

It checks the groan, and makes the load,
Through meek submission, light.

Long in the fiery furnace try'd
With salutary pain ;
In suff'rings to thy Lord ally'd,
With him triumphant reign !

GOD brought thee low, to raise thee up,
He kill'd to make alive :
Go, bless him for the bitt'rest cup
Thy Saviour's love could give.

Yes, 'twas from love, from love divine,
Thy sharpest suff'rings flow'd,
To wean from earth their blest design,
And fit the soul for GOD.

Behold the husband, father, friend,
His parting blessing give ;
He lov'd his own, and to the end
Exhorts in love to live.

But what engross'd his care supreme,
Was *Mary's* better part :
" Religion be your single aim,
" Let GOD have all your heart !"

" And now, O spotless Lamb, to thee
" My spirit I resign ;
" To thy all-cleansing blood I flee :
" Sweet Jesus, I am thine."

Thus may we close our days of woe,
And quit this scene of pain ;
Nor sigh at losing all below,
When all above we gain.

Divinely

Divinely arm'd, we dare defy
 The worst that death can bring :
 O grave, where is thy victory !
 O death, where is thy sting !



P S A L M xlvii.

ON GOD supreme our hope depends;
 Whose omnipresent sight
 Through all the pathless realms extends
 Of uncreated night.

Plung'd in the gulph of deep distress,
 To him we raise our cry ;
 His mercy bids our sorrows cease,
 And fills our tongues with joy.

Though earth her ancient seat forsake,
 By pangs convulsive torn ;
 Though her self-balance'd fabric shake,
 And troubled nature mourn :

Though hills be in the ocean lost,
 With all their shaggy load,
 No fear shall e'er invade the just,
 Or shake his trust in GOD.

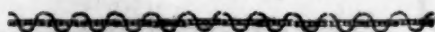
In vain th' unbottom'd wild abyss
 Its force tumultuous pours,
 In vain the watry legions rise
 Loud thundering o'er the shores.

What though the frightened mountains nod
 Shook by the rolling war ?
 Sion secure enjoys the flood
 Wide-wasting from afar !

The

The Lord most high, on Sion's hill
Has fixt his sure abode;
Nor dare the threatening waves assail
The city of our GOD!

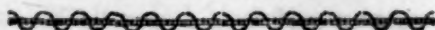
The stormy winds and wild abyfs,
Th' almighty word obey;
Which rules the raging of the sea,
And points the storm its way.



GENESIS xxiii. 20.

*The field and the cave were made sure to Abraham, for a
possession of a burying-place.*

ACQUIRING his *first* spot of ground,
A burying place the Patriarch found!
May I, like him, a stranger rove,
Heir of the promis'd land above;
The settlement on earth I crave,
The sole possession is—a grave!



EXODUS xix. 4.

I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

AS an eagle cleaves the air,
Whose wings support her young,
Jesus doth his people bear,
As swift, as smooth, as strong!
Saviour, urge thy rapid flight;
Soar to that sublime abode!
Bear us far above all height,
And bring us home to GOD.

THE